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OLC 70-0042
16 January 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

**SUBJECT: Meeting with Representative John O. Marsh (D., Va.)
Concerning his Recent Trip to Vietnam and Laos**

1. Representative John O. Marsh (D., Va.), who returned from extensive travel in Vietnam and Laos last night, called today and said he would like to talk with me about his trip. I met with him at his home for about three hours.

2. Mr. Marsh traveled under the specific direction of the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Mr. Mahon, and carried with him a letter from the Chairman outlining the broad scope of his objectives. (Copy attached.) Mr. Marsh did not dwell too much on his travel in Vietnam (itinerary attached) but he obviously covered a great deal of territory and was well received there by both U.S. and South Vietnamese leaders. During his stay in Vietnam he had an opportunity to meet with President Thieu. Ambassador Bunker accompanied him on this visit.

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5. Mr. Marsh said he was tremendously impressed by what is being done in Laos. He said he had just about decided to write off Laos before his visit but he is now convinced that maintaining our present policy there is essential to the future of Southeast Asia. Marsh was of course impressed with the work that General Vang Pao is doing. He mentioned that Pao was making good use of Soviet tanks and trucks along with small arms and ammunition which he has captured. Marsh said that a number of pictures were taken during his visit to the Plaines. He thought Chairman Mahon would be interested in seeing these if we are able to get copies of them.

6. Mr. Marsh also mentioned that Vang Pao had given him a ring with a specially made setting attached to the ring by fine wire. He said he didn't wear the ring often but somehow the setting was lost and he is very concerned about it. (This is apparently a special ring which Vang Pao gives to his visitors.) Marsh said if he could get a design of the setting he would try to have it copied. He does not want Vang Pao to know that the setting was lost.

7. Mr. Marsh also mentioned in passing that a state senator from Alaska (later identified as Senator Lewis) arrived in Vietnam shortly before Marsh's departure and was taken in tow by a man identified by Marsh as [redacted] Marsh checked on Lewis during a stop-over in Alaska on his return and learned that Lewis supposedly is [redacted] He thought it might be useful for [redacted] to know this.

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8. Mr. Marsh is interested in having follow-up conversations with George Carver on Vietnam and the [redacted] case but at the moment he is more anxious to meet with our Laos people in order to orient himself on a map to the various places that he visited in Laos. These places were marked on his itinerary only by numbered landing sites. Arrangements have been made for him to visit Headquarters sometime Monday, at which time [redacted] will give him a marked map and go over it with him.

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9. Marsh said his report to Chairman Mahon will be classified. He also said he does not propose to publicize his visit to the Plaine des Jarres. His report will be in relatively low key and he will indicate to Mr. Mahon that he does not plan to discuss sensitive aspects of his trip except at the direction of the Chairman. He said he would like to talk with us further about the handling of his report to Mahon when he meets with us on Monday.



Deputy Legislative Counsel

Attachments:

Letter from Chairman Mahon
Itinerary

Distribution:

Original - Subject w/atts
1 - DD/P w/o atts
1 - C/FE w/o atts
1 - [Redacted] w/o atts
1 - SAVA (Mr. Carver) w/o atts
1 - OLC Chrono w/o atts

OLC/GLC:gs (19 January 1970)

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